

HENNES PAYNTER COMMUNICATIONS

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Thank you for coming this morning and for your interests and concerns for the well-being and welfare of Amanda Berry, Gina DeJesus, Michelle Knight and their families. My name is Jim Wooley. With me are attorneys Heather Kimmel and Henry Hilow, Barbara Paynter, Sheriff Frank Bova, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI - Cleveland Division Steve Anthony, and Cleveland Police Department Deputy Chief Ed Tomba.

We have been asked to read the following statement on behalf of Amanda Berry, Gina DeJesus and Michelle Knight.

Amanda Berry, Gina DeJesus and Michelle Knight are extremely grateful for the generous assistance and loving support of their families, friends, and the community. They are also very grateful for the tireless efforts of numerous law enforcement officials with the Cleveland Police Department, the Cuyahoga County Sheriff, the FBI, and the Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's office.

Amanda Berry says, "Thank you so much for everything you're doing and continue to do. I am so happy to be home with my family."

Gina DeJesus says, "I'm so happy to be home and want to thank everybody for all your prayers. I just want time now to be with my family."

Michelle Knight says, "Thank you to everyone for your support and good wishes. I am healthy, happy and safe and will reach out to family, friends and supporters in good time."

There have been numerous requests from the media to interview or speak with Amanda Berry, Gina DeJesus, and Michelle Knight. In response to those requests, please understand this: Ms. Berry, Ms. DeJesus, and Ms. Knight will not be participating in any interviews or speaking with any representatives of the media at this time, for the following reasons. First, there is a pending criminal investigation and prosecution. Ms. Berry, Ms. DeJesus, and Ms. Knight are witnesses and victims in that proceeding. It is not in the best interests of anyone connected with that proceeding for Ms. Berry, Ms. DeJesus, and Ms. Knight to be making statements to the media while that proceeding is pending.

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Second, and most importantly, Ms. Berry, Ms. DeJesus, and Ms. Knight have asked – in fact, have pleaded – for privacy at this time so that they can continue to heal and reconnect with their families. You all care greatly about their well-being, so please respect this most basic request. Give them the time, the space, and the privacy so that they can continue to get stronger. There may be a time, at some point in the future, that Ms. Berry, Ms. DeJesus, and Ms. Knight will want to tell their stories. Let me make this very clear. That will not be while the criminal proceeding is pending and it will not be until they advise us that they are ready to do so.

From this point forward, we ask that all media inquiries be made to Barbara Paynter at Hennes Paynter Communications. It would be very helpful if inquiries are made in writing. We will consider every inquiry and respond at the appropriate time.

Finally, there continue to be numerous generous offers of support from members of the community. Ms. Berry, Ms. DeJesus, and Ms. Knight are very appreciative of the generosity. The offers have come in many forms. Persons interested in providing support are encouraged to work with legitimate entities such as the Cleveland Courage Fund. Please contact Jim Wooley (216-586-7345) or Heather Kimmel (216-586-7195) at Jones Day with any questions about providing support.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

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